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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chen (U.S. Patent No. 5,973,248). Chen does not disclose a socket component including a pair of inclined edges that each define an opening for a socket as required by Applicant's claims. Chen discloses a combination side-drum holder unit 30. As disclosed in column 2, lines 38 to 47, the holder unit 30 includes two ball socket halves 31, 31' and two balls 41 and 41' received between the halves 31 and 31'. Each half includes a mounting shell 32 or 32' and a holder shells 33 or 33'. As shown in Figure 3, the edge that defines the openings for the sockets of Chen is not inclined. Chen does not disclose a socket component including a pair of inclined edges that each define an opening for a socket. Chen does not anticipate Applicant's claims, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Herbermann (U.S. Patent No. 5,383,738). Herbermann does not disclose a method for supporting an object including the step of providing a socket component includes a pair of sockets. Herbermann discloses a support system 20 includes a plurality of ball jointed links 26. As disclosed in column 2, lines 25 to 32, each link 32 includes a female socket 30 at one end and a male ball 32 at an opposing end. Each link only includes one socket 30. Applicant's claims require the step of providing a socket component including a pair of sockets. Herbermann only discloses providing one socket, and Applicant's claims are not anticipated by Herbermann.

The Examiner further rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Chen. Claim 3 claims that the balls have a diameter of 1.75 inch and that the arms of the ball have a diameter of approximately 1.25 inch. The Examiner contends that it is an obvious matter to change the size and the diameter of the balls and arms. There is no suggestion in Chen to include balls and arms having the diameter as claimed, and certainly not the relative sizes.

The Examiner further rejected claims 4-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Chen in view of Herbermann. Claim 4 claims that the material of the balls are made of a harder material than the sockets, claim 5 claims that the sockets are made of aluminum, and claims 12 claims that the balls are serrated. Herbermann discloses forming a ball of a material harder than the sockets, making the sockets of aluminum, and serrated balls. The Examiner contends that it would be obvious to provide these features in Chen, and therefore Applicant's

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claims are obvious. Although these features are disclosed in Herbermann, Applicant respectfully disagrees that it would have been obvious to employ these features in Chen. Applicant is not claiming to have invented these features, but rather is claiming these features in a novel ball and socket assembly. The use of these features is not disclosed or suggested in Chen. It would not be obvious to employ these features in Chen, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

As to claims 6-11, the Examiner states in paragraph 6 that the features claimed in these claims are disclosed in Chen. However, as explained above, Chen does not disclose a socket component including a pair of inclined edges that each define an opening for a socket as required by Claim 1. The edges that define the openings for the sockets of Chen are not inclined. Therefore, claims 6-9 are not anticipated by or obvious in view of Chen.

Claims 13-21 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Herbermann in view of Chen. Herbermann discloses a support system 20 includes a plurality of ball jointed links 26 including a female socket 30 at one end and a male ball 32 at an opposing end. Chen discloses a unit 30 including two socket halves 31, 31'. When the halves 31, 31' are positioned around a ball 41, the ball 41 is enclosed in the socket. The Examiner contends that it would be obvious to modify the support system 20 of Herbermann to include two socket halves as suggested by Chen.

It is not obvious to combine the socket halves of Chen with the ball jointed links 26 of Herbermann. Herbermann discloses that the links include a female socket 30 at one end and a male ball 32 at the other end. A ball 32 of another link 26 is secured to the socket 30 by a clamp 28. As the clamp 28 is employed to secure adjoining links 26, there is no reason or benefit to forming the links 26 of two halves to enclose the ball 32 as suggested by Chen because the clamp 28 provides this function. Additionally, Herbermann discloses that each link 26 only includes one socket. If the socket halves of Chen were combined with Herbermann, the combination would provide a link including two halves having a ball at one end and a socket at the opposite end. That is, the combination would suggest a link only having one socket. Applicant's claims require that there are a pair of sockets. The combination does not suggest a pair of sockets, and Applicant's claims are not obvious.

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Thus, claims 1-30 are in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., \$82.00 for 8 additional small entity claims. No additional fees are seen to be required. If any additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment. Therefore, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.

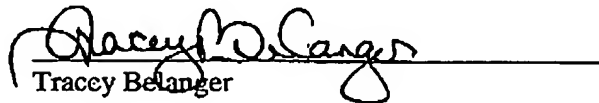


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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Art Unit 3682, Before Final facsimile no. (703) 872-9326, on this 26th day of June 2003.



Tracey Belanger

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